[English]

Programmes/Serials on Rural/Tribal Culture

1058. SHRI HARIN PATHAK :
SHRIMATI CHHABILA ARVIND NETAM :

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) the percentage of time has been allotted to rural/tribal culture on Doordarshan;

(b) whether the production of serials/programmes based on such culture has been gradually declining;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to encourage this culture?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) No specific percentage of time has been allotted for telecast of programmes on rural/tribal culture. However, various Doordarshan programmes exhibit rural/tribal life and culture in one way or the other. Apart from this, a time slot from 6.00 p.m. to 7.00 p.m. has also been allotted for rural programmes which includes mostly Agriculture, Health, Welfare, Women and Children, Rural Development, Folk and Rural sanitation etc. These programmes are telecast regularly from sixteen Kendras five days a week.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) It is the constant endeavour of Doordarshan to depict various facets of rural/tribal culture through its various programmes.

[Translation]

Transportation of Goods

1059. JUSTICE GUMAN MAL LODHA
PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the contribution of Railways in transportation of goods in the country has constantly decline;

(b) if so, the total percentage of transportation of goods undertaken by Railways in the country;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the operational cost of railways is also increasing as compared to road transport;

(d) if so, the reaction of the Government in this regard; and

(e) the scheme prepared by the Government to reduce the operational cost?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b). Regular compilation of rail and road shares in total freight movement is not done. Last time these were compiled by the Steering Committee on Perspective Planning for Transport Development set up by Planning Commission, which submitted its report in 1988, according to which Railway's share during 1950-51 was 89% and in 1986-87 it was 51.5%. However, Economic Survey 1995-96 assesses that presently road traffic accounts for 60% of goods traffic.

(c) to (e). The operational cost depends on a number of parameters such as distance moved, the commodity being moved, the type of terrain etc. The distance over which movement by railway is economical varies from commodity to commodity. Continuous efforts are being made to reduce oprational costs through improved practices and technological developments.

[English]

Late running of bi-weekly Rajdhani Express running between Patna and New Delhi

1060. SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the newly introduced bi-weekly Rajdhani Express running between Patna and New Delhi takes three hours extra time as compared to Howrah-New Delhi and Guwahati-New Delhi Rajdhani Express which runs via Patna;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that it takes excess time due to longer route taken via Lucknow;

(c) whether the Government propose to revise the route to reduce time; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) The bi-weekly 2309/2310 New Delhi-Patna Rajdhani Express takes 2 hrs. 25 mts/2hrs 55 mts. more than that taken by 2305/2306 New Delhi-Howrah Rajdhani Express and 2 hrs/2 hrs 53 mts. more than 2423/2424 New Delhi-Guwahati Rajdhani Express between New Delhi and Patna.

(b) The route besides being longer is non-electrified having lower speeds and is largely single line between Lucknow and Mughalsarai.

(c) and (d) There is no such proposal at present as this train route serves Lucknow and Varanasi.

Recruitment on the Railways

1061. SHRI K.D. SULTANPURI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) The number of persons recruited/being recruited in Railways during the current year;

(b) whether the Govt. propose to recruit women in the Railway Protection Police Force; and

(c) if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (c). Information is being collected and shall be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Signing the Agreement

1062. SHRI R. DEVADASS :
SHRI SYDAIAH KOTA :
DR. M. JAGANNATH :
SHRI MOHAN RAWALE :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Air India has lost Rs. 63 crores due to the signing of Wet Lease and at the time of signing the Agreement Air India was aware that Wet Lease will be significantly costlier;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) the grounds on which the agreement was approved; and

(d) the action taken/proposed to be taken against the erring officials?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) to (d) Despite knowing that wetleased operations would result in losses, Air India decided to wetlease three A-310 and two L-1011 aircraft to provide growth and to bridge capacity to expand their market presence in the long term commercial interest. This is an interim measure till Air India acquires own aircraft.

Air India has since terminated its wetlease agreement with Caribjet for one A-310 and two L-1011 aircraft due to violations of Civil Aviation requirements in their operations.

Upgradation and Validation for Air Tickets in A.I.

1063. SHRI UTTAMSINGH PAWAR : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) the norms prescribed for the upgradation and validation for air tickets in Air India;

(b) the number of air tickets upgraded and revalidated during 1995 and 1996, so far, and the authority under whose orders it has been done; and

(c) the loss suffered by Air India as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) Following categories of passengers are upgraded to the next higher class by Air India subject to availability of seats :-

(i) A Maharajah Club member alongwith his family.

(ii) Joint Secretaries and above in all the Ministries and Departments of Government of India.

(iii) Selected passengers holding full fare tickets on commercial considerations.

(iv) Off loaded passengers.

No validation of tickets is required as upgradations are effected at the airport subject to availability of seats.

(b) Regional Heads, on line Managers of Stations, Commercial Manager of Delhi and Mumbai airports, Deputy Commercial Manager, Tourism Air India are authorised to upgrade. The information regarding actual upgradations during 1995 and 1996 is not readily available.

(c) No loss of revenue is suffered as upgraded passengers do not displace any revenue passenger.

Facilities to Pilgrims at Sabarimala Temple of Kerala

1064. PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government are aware that millions of devotees visit every year the Sabarimala Temple in Kerala and that they are not provided with adequate facilities;

(b) if so, whether the Union Government have received any proposal from the Government of Kerala to provide better facilities to the devotees;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the details of the action plan of the Union Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) to (d). Development of Tourist facilities is primarily the responsibility of the State Govt. However, the Department of Tourism provides Central financial assistance to State/Union Territory Govts. on the basis of specific proposals received, their merits inter-se-priority and availability of funds.

No proposal for Sabarimala has been received from the State Govt.

Selling of Boeing-737-200S

1065. SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "IA sells its old